

On What Day Should We Celebrate the New Moon?

I've been keeping the new moon, mentioned in Scripture, since around 1998. The initial texts that got my attention were 2 Kings 4:23, Isaiah 66:22-23, and Amos 8:5. Since then I've found many more texts showing that the new moon is a special day Yahweh gave to His people. It was not an ordinary work day. Ezekiel 46:1 may be the most potent text proving that.

But this article isn't so much about keeping the new moon as it is about WHEN to keep the new moon. Since learning from Scripture that it is special, I've also learned that different people and different groups vary on WHEN the new moon should be kept. Here are the three views in a nutshell.

1. Some believe the first visible crescent, seen in the western sky, shortly after sunset, marks the beginning of the new moon. At the end of the month the moon "goes away" (into darkness) and then reappears as new again.
2. Some believe that the day following conjunction is the new moon. Conjunction is the time period when the sun and the moon "cross paths," and can happen at any point in a day. The evening after this event begins new moon day.
3. Some believe the day the conjunction happens in, is new moon day. This is the day that belongs to the conjunction or renewing of the moon.

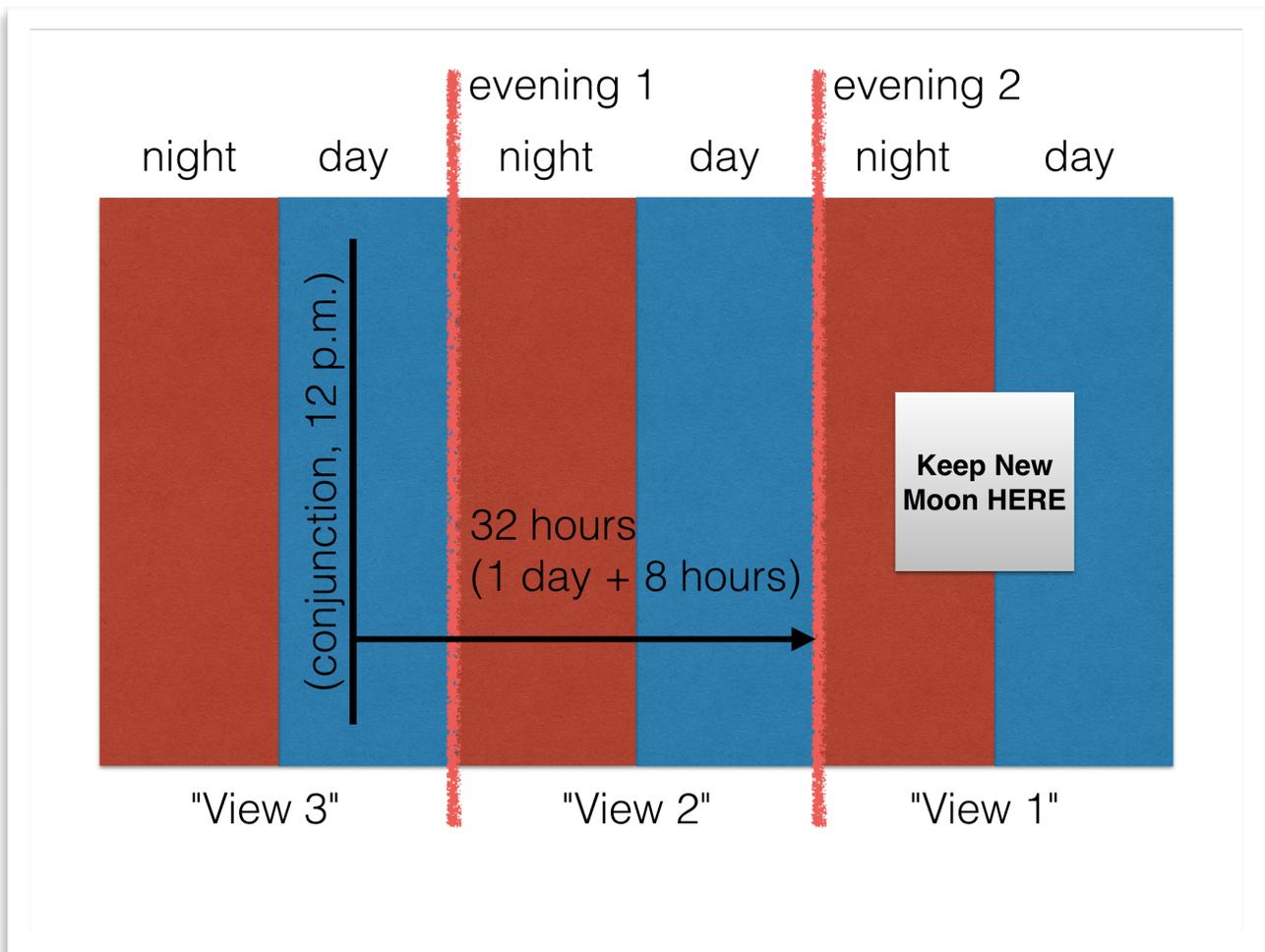
I have written extensively on this subject elsewhere if anyone is interested, but I want to show in this short paper, a few simple points why I believe view 2 (above) is the best choice of the three.

View 1

Let's start with view 1, the first visible crescent. The main problem I have with this view is that it often skips over an entire 24 hour day that is inside of the new moon. Let me explain.

Let's say that the conjunction of the moon happened at 12 p.m. What we would call "noon" or "lunchtime." At the end of this day (at sunset), one day would end and evening would begin. This evening would begin an entire evening-to-evening day inside of a newly rebuilding moon. But, the first visible crescent view would skip over this day and take the next, because the crescent could not be seen at the beginning of this day.

Below you'll find all three days/views illustrated. In this scenario, the first evening after conjunction (evening 1 on the chart) takes place around 6-8 hours after conjunction (depending upon what season of the year you are in). This evening is inside of a rebuilding moon, but no crescent will be seen, because the moon is at the most only 8 hours old.



The next evening (evening 2 on the chart) begins around 32 hours after conjunction. On this evening you will see a new, thin "thumbnail" sized crescent for your new moon day (view 1), but you've skipped over the entire 24 hour day that happened before it.

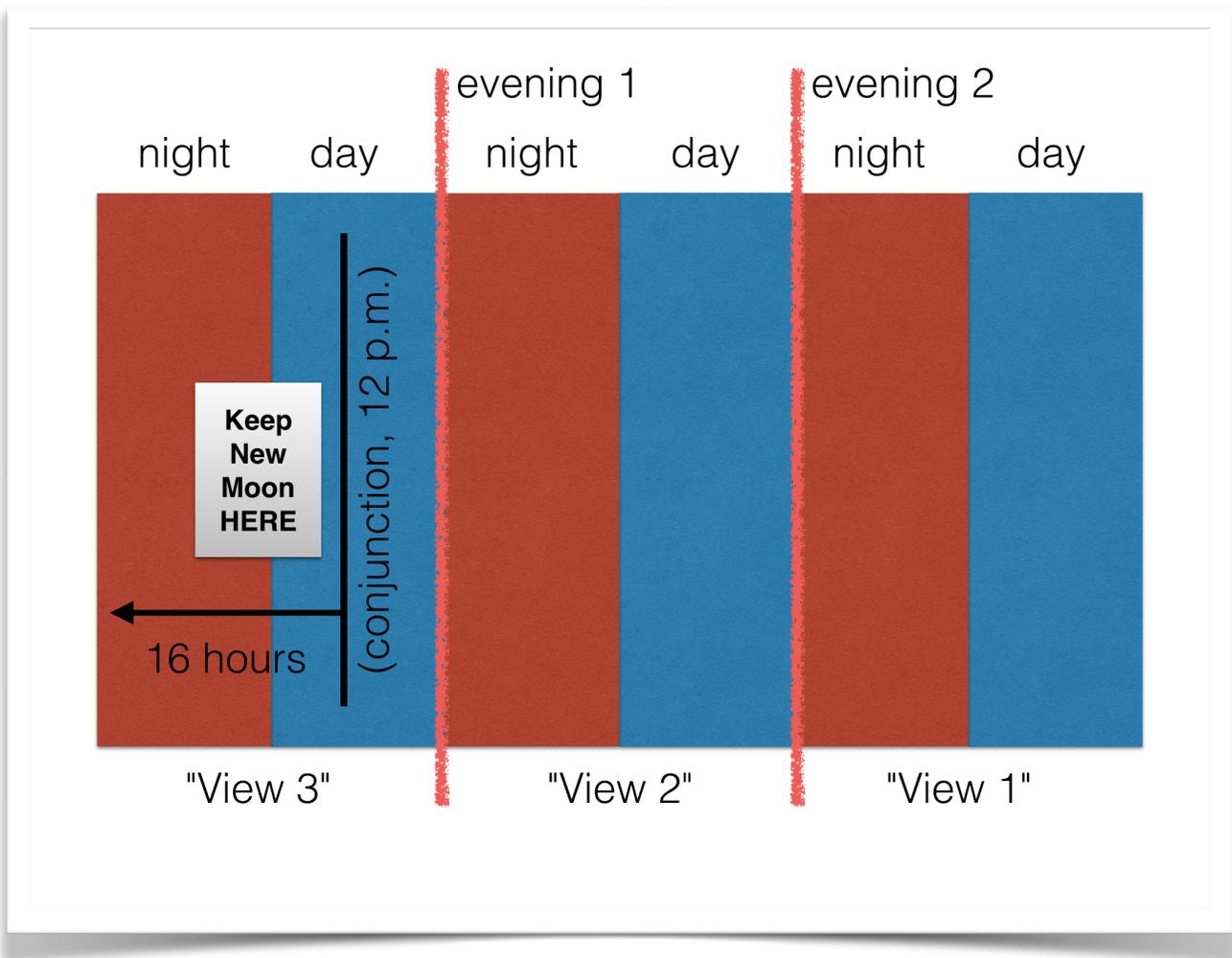
It doesn't make sense to me to skip an entire 24 hour day, inside of a rebuilding moon, and opt for taking the SECOND 24 hour day, inside of a rebuilding moon, just because you can now see a waxing crescent.

View 3

Let's now discuss view 3, the day the conjunction happens in. The main problem I have with this view is that it always begins new moon while the moon is still waning.

At the pivot point of conjunction is where the moon stops waning and begins waxing. The moon lessens or "shrinks" all the way up to conjunction, and then builds or "grows" immediately after conjunction. You can tell if the moon is waning or waxing by simply looking at it in the sky. A waxing moon will be lit up on its right side, until it reaches fullness. A waning moon is then lit up on its left side, until it shrinks down to the point of its conjunction with the sun.

As you can see on the next chart, keeping this day for the new moon means that you always begin your new moon day BEFORE the moon starts waxing. The moon will be anywhere from 29 to 30 days old when this day begins, and there's nothing new about a moon that old. It doesn't make sense to me to begin keeping new moon day before the new moon arrives.

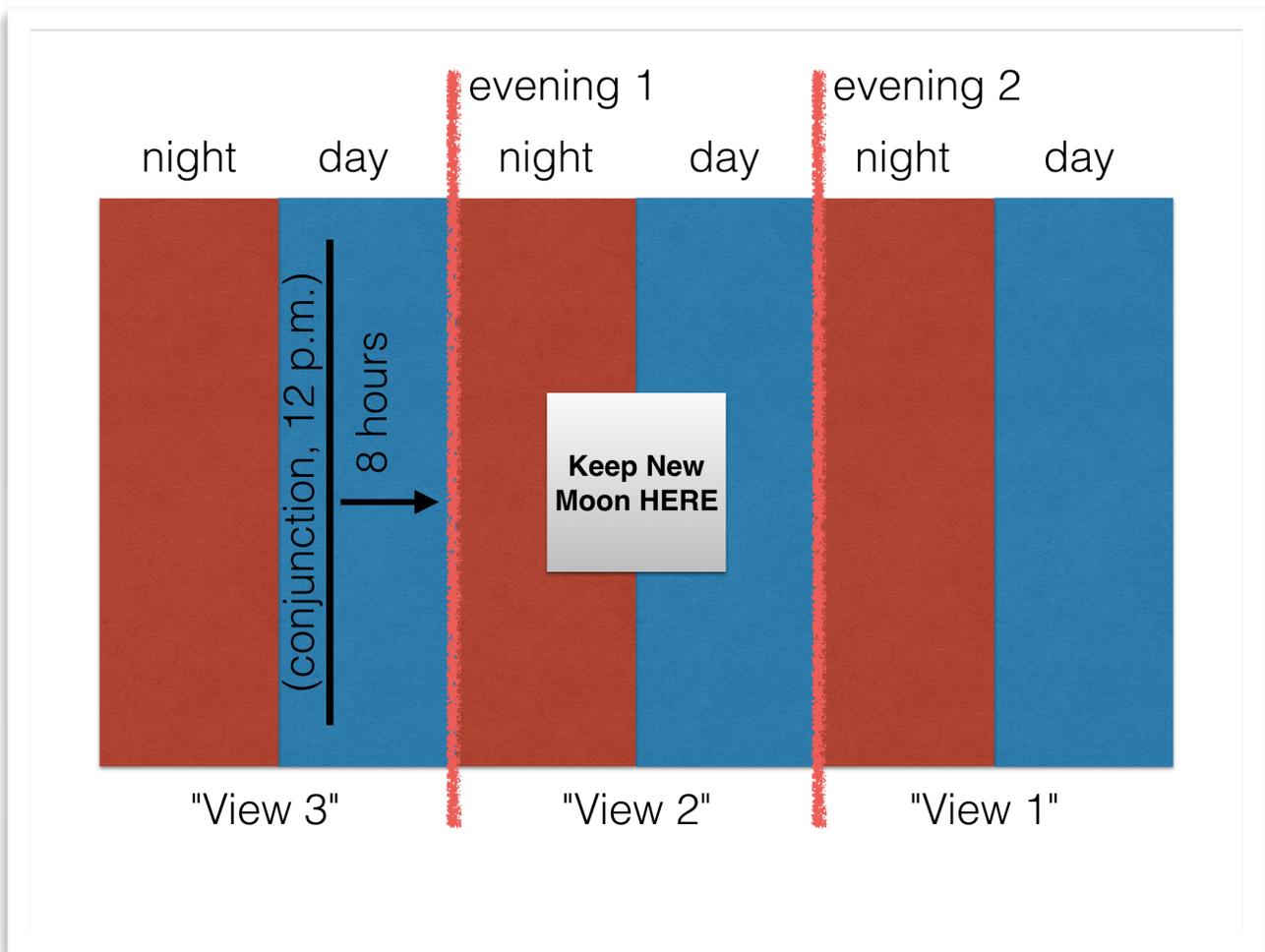


While view 1 skips over an entire 24 hour day, view 3 moves backwards before the moon has even started to rebuild.

View 2

Let's finally discuss view 2, the day that I believe is the best choice of the three options. The main thing I like about this day is that it is the first complete day, *without exception*, inside of every rebuilding moon.

In this scenario, we have conjunction taking place, and then at evening, new moon day begins. In our example chart, the moon will be approximately 8 hours old when this evening begins.



While it is true that the moon began to rebuild around 8 hours before this evening (evening 1 on the chart) began, here are other truths about this view:

1. Conjunction took place in the middle of the previous day. You cannot start keeping new moon day in the middle of a day. You must let that day run out its course.
2. View 2 is always the first full day inside of a rebuilding moon, as well as the first evening of the new moon.
3. When this day begins, the moon can be anywhere from 1 to 23 hours old, but *never* 1 day old. Using this view means that you never skip over an entire day, you only wait for the allotted hours till evening.

I have friends and brethren who use view 1 and view 3, and I respect their heart's desire to observe the new moon that Yahweh gave to us, but I disagree with skipping over a day (view 1), or moving backwards before the renewing of the moon takes place (view 3). The evening that follows conjunction is the best choice of the three. *It's always the first evening of the new moon.*

The evening before it (view 3) is the last evening of the old moon, and the evening after it (view 1) is the second evening of the new moon.

Brethren, let us follow the best method.

~ Matthew Janzen

P.S. -- For much more detail, please visit my website at ministersnewcovenant.org. There you will find many audio teachings about the new moon, as well as written studies.